



The Daedalean

Semper Discens

*Monthly Aerospace Education Newsletter of the Connecticut
Wing of the Civil Air Patrol*

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FOR FUTURE PLANNING

09 OCT-CTWG Rocketry Competition
22-23 OCT-CTWG Convention

COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE DAE

*Squadron Commanders and Aerospace Education
Officers are requested to send the following
information to srocketto@aquilasys.com:*

- 1. The name of the current AEO.*
- 2. Any new Yeager Awards.*
- 3. Any changes in AEO Specialty Tracks*
- 4. Any information about current squadron
activities in aerospace such as special
events or field trips.*
- 5. Cadet rocketry badge awards.*

2011 COMMANDER'S CUP ROCKETRY CONTEST

Date: Saturday, 15 October, 2011

Time: 0930-noon

Place: Gadbois Property, Salem, CT-go to the
following website for directions:

<http://www.catorockets.org/salemlaunchsite.php>

SQUADRON AEROSPACE EVENTS

*143rd Composite Squadron
submitted by
Capt Tim McCandless*

Six cadets from the 143rd traveled to Springfield, Vermont for a day of glider orientation flights.



*C/1Lt Midhat Mullai connects the tow rope for
C/A1C Matthew McCarthy-Calabrese*

Thames River Composite Squadron



Capt Thomas Petry has completed the Aerospace Education Program for Senior Members and earned the Yeager Ribbon.

CURRENT AEROSPACE EVENTS

CHINA PREPARES FOR SPACE STATION MISSION

Tiangong-1, China's preliminary test vehicle to orbit a space station, completed its second orbital transfer Friday afternoon BJT with its apogee altitude rising from 200 kilometers to 362 kilometers. The ship carries some 300 national flags, all of which have been previously flown in space aboard *Endeavour* or a *Soyuz* vehicle. A one month orbit is planned.

DREAMLINER DELIVERED

All Nippon Airways took delivery of the first Boeing 787 Dreamliner in Everett, Washington last Sunday. The Dreamliner is Boeing's first new transport design in two decades. The aircraft is the first to use fiber composite material for the fuselage, equipped with Rolls-Royce Trent engines, and promises greater fuel efficiency. One interesting feature is that the cabin will be pressurized at 6,000 ft rather than the standard 8,000 ft which promises a more comfortable environment for the passengers.

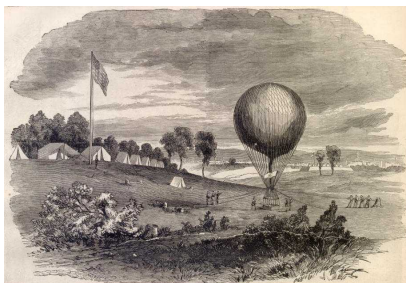
ASTRONAUTS CRITICIZE US SPACE PROGRAM

In testimony before the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Neil Armstrong said that the termination of the space shuttle program has left the United States in an "embarrassing and unacceptable" situation. He states that "that NASA needs a stronger vision for the future and should focus on returning humans to the Moon and to the International Space Station." Eugene Cernan recommended returning the space shuttle to service and returning humans to the moon.

MEMORIES OF OCTOBER'S PAST

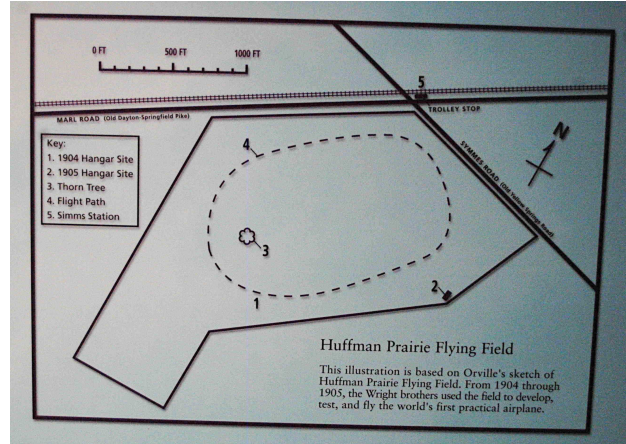
Some Highlights in the History of Aviation

01 OCT 1861-The United States Army Balloon Corps is formed. Prof. Thaddeus S. C. Lowe, the grandfather of famed aviatrix Pancho Barnes, is named Chief Aeronaut.



Reconnaissance Balloon at First Bull Run (sketched by Edward Pietsch for Harper's Weekly.)

05 OCT, 1905 Wilbur Wright in the Flyer II makes the 1st flight of over a half-an-hour at Huffman Prairie, Simms Station, Ohio.



Schematic of the Huffman Prairie Site Used by the Wright Brothers for Testing after Kitty Hawk

09 OCT, 1930-Pan American receives its first Martin M-130 Flying Boat.



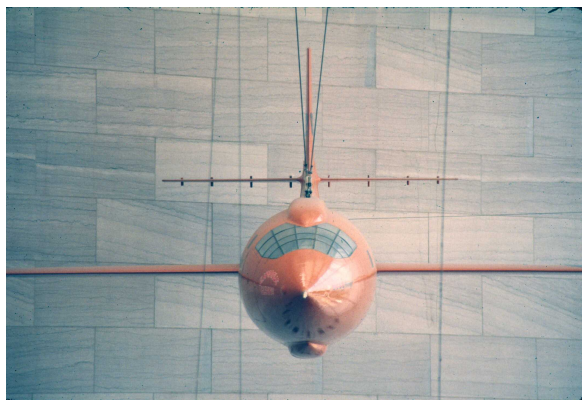
China Clipper Model at the Glenn Martin Museum, Middle River, Maryland

12 OCT, 1954-First Flight of the Cessna T-37 Tweet.



A T-37 Bearing US Army Markings Ft. Rucker Army Aviation Museum

14 OCT, 1947-Capt Charles Yeager becomes the first man to exceed the speed of sound flying the Bell XS-1.



Glamorous Glennis at the National Air and Space Museum, Washington

23 OCT, 1943-The Battle of Leyte Gulf, the last stand of the Imperial Japanese Navy, commences. One highlight is the gallant stand by the 5 destroyers and destroyer escorts of "Taffy 3" in their headlong attack against Admiral Kurita's battleship and cruiser fleet. Kurita withdraws and loses his chance to destroy the transports and light warships of the Philippine invasion fleet.



Taffy 3 Memorial Honoring the Five "Little Boys." (enlarge to read details)

24 OCT, 1942-Charles G. Abbott, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, concedes that Langley's Aerodrome, which failed to fly in 1903 but did fly in 1914 was radically modified. This established priority for the Wright Brothers as the inventors of the first successful heavier than air, powered, man carrying, and controllable aircraft.

31 OCT, 1957-A USN Douglas R4D-5, *Que Sera Sera*, makes the first landing at the South Pole. This event is discussed in the following article.

OCTOBER HISTORICAL FEATURE ARTICLE

THE HIGHEST LATITUDES AIRCRAFT AND POLAR EXPLORATION

PART ONE *Antarctica*

First Landing at the South Pole

The month of October makes the anniversary of the first landing of an aircraft at the South Pole. On 31 October, 1956, a US Navy Douglas R4D-5 Skytrain, named *Que Sera Sera*, the naval version

of the the legendary DC-3. Piloted by Lt. Com. Gus Shinn, the aircraft touched down and immediately disgorged it crew led by Rear Admiral George Dufek, the first US citizens to set foot at the southernmost point of the earth. A USAF Douglas C-124 Globemaster circled overhead, ready to drop emergency supplies if necessary.



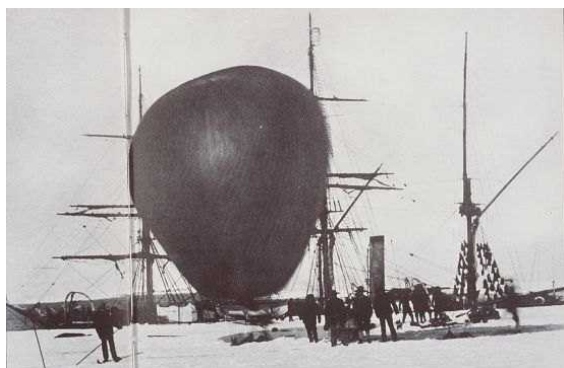
Que Sera Sera on Display in Museum of US Navy Aviation

In less than an hour, they unloaded supplies for a planned scientific station and found out that the aircraft's skis were frozen to the ice. Fortunately,

the aircraft was equipped with jet assisted take-off bottles (JATO) and Shinn fired them in four successive volleys to break free and help the aircraft lift off from the 10,000 foot ice plateau.

First Flights-Captive Balloons

One of the first sighting, in 1820, of the Antarctic land mass is attributed to Connecticut native Nathaniel Palmer of Stonington, who was hunting seal in *Hero*, a 47 foot sloop! Aerial exploration of Antarctica can be traced back to the 1902 Scott Expedition. Captain Robert Falcon Scott was one of the hard men who tackled the formidable challenges of polar exploration. In his first expedition, he brought a British army captive balloon, *Eva*, and on 04 February made the first ascent. The second flight was manned by Ernest Shackleton, another fabled polar explorer, who took the first aerial photographs of Antarctica. About two months later, members of the German South Polar Expedition repeated the feats with two similar ascents.



First Aircraft on the Continent

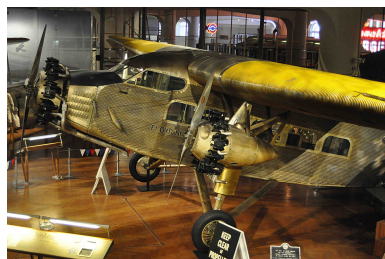
In 1912, the Australasian Antarctic Expedition, led by Douglas Mawson, brought a Vickers No. 1 monoplane designed by the noted Frenchman, Robert Esnault-Pelterie, inventor of the joystick. The aircraft never flew in Antarctica. It was converted to an air-tractor to haul sledges, broke down on its second trip, and was abandoned.

The Pre-World War Two Era

A host of expeditions headed south with aircraft to explore the coldest and largest desert in the world. The Australian Sir Hubert Wilkins brought two Lockheed Vegas to Deception Island and two pioneer Arctic pilots, the Americans Ben Eielson and Joseph Crosson. Piloted by Eielson, the aircraft overflew the Antarctic Peninsula, thus earning priority as the heavier than air flight in Antarctica.

First Flight Over the South Pole

The largest of all Antarctic expeditions during this period were those commanded by Richard Byrd. In 1928, Byrd's party landed on the Ross Ice Shelf and constructed the base known as Little America. They also assembled three aircraft: a Ford Tri-Motor named *Floyd Bennett*, a Fairchild FC-2W2, denominated *Stars and Stripes*, and the *Virginia*, a Fokker F.XI Universal.



*Ford Tri-Motor
Floyd Bennett at
the Henry Ford
Museum*

*Fairchild FC-2W2
Stars and Stripes at
the Virginia A&S
Museum*



On 28 November, 1929, navigator Byrd, pilot Bernt Balchen, co-pilot/radio operator Harold June, and photographer Ashley McKinley flew a 19 hour round trip in the *Floyd Bennett* from Little America to the geographic South Pole and back.

Norway Enters the Arena

The greatest of all Norwegian aviators, Hjalmar Riiser-Larsen, led a series of privately funded expeditions south in the early '30s. Norway was intent on claiming land and locating whaling grounds with some scientific research thrown in as dressing. A geographically positive achievement was the production of maps for a large part what is now known as Queen Maud Land. Riiser-Larsen, already noted for his arctic air explorations, went on to command the Norwegian Air Force and, as a civilian airline executive, promote the development of Scandinavian Air Systems polar routes

First Flight Across Antarctica

Lincoln Ellsworth, scion of a wealthy Pennsylvania family that had made a fortune in coal, funded and accompanied a number of arctic and antarctic expeditions. In 1934, he outfitted a former herring boat and renamed it *Wyatt Earp*. Part of its cargo was a ski equipped Northrop Gamma named *Polar Star*.



Polar Star at the NA&SM, The Mall, Washington

After several misadventures, on 23 November, 1935, Ellsworth and his pilot, Herbert Hollick-Kenyon, departed Dundee Island in the Weddell Sea and started on the first trans-Antarctic flight. Their goal was Byrd's former station at Little America. The voyage required four landings, flew 2,400 miles but on 5 December, fuel exhaustion forced them to land 25 miles short of Little America. They spent the next six days walking. A British research vessel rescued them a month later.

Post World War Two Activities

Operation Highjump

In 1946 and 1947, the US Navy sent a task force of over a dozen ships equipped with about two dozen aircraft to study and develop military techniques for operating in polar conditions and to gather knowledge about a wide range of subjects of interest to the military. Three navy flight crew members were killed when their Martin PBM Mariner crashed during blizzard conditions.

In addition to two Mariners, the Navy also deployed one Sikorsky HNS-1 Hoverfly, two Sikorsky HNS-1 Hoverflies, four Sikorsky HO3S-1 Dragonflies, a Noorduyt Norseman, two Grumman J2F-6 Ducks, two Stinson OT-1 Sentinels, and six Douglas R4D-5L Skytrains.

The ski-equipped Skytrains, equipped with JATO, were launched from the aircraft carrier USS Philippine Sea. These were the heaviest aircraft ever launched from a carrier up to that time.



Skytrain on Deck of USS Philippine Sea (CV-47)
(US Navy Photo)

Two seaplane tenders, the USS Carrituck and the USS Pine Island also supported air operations.



USS Carrituck (AV-7) (USN photo)

Aircraft were used to perform photographic mapping, transport supplies and personnel, and perform search and rescue.

*The International Geophysical Year (July 1957-
December 1958)*

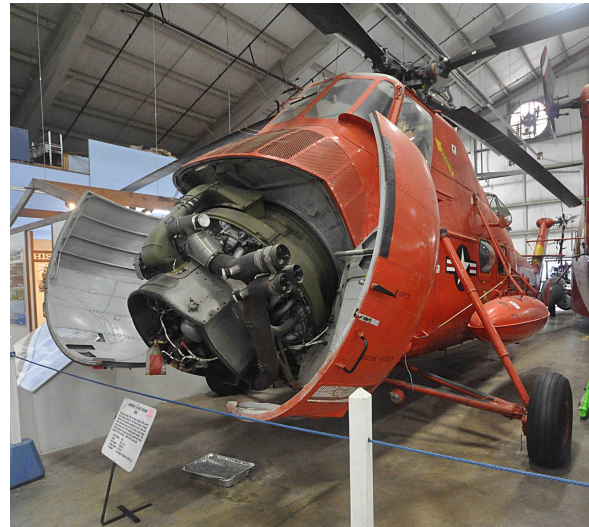
Operation Deep Freeze I

Once again the US Navy deployed a large force to Antarctica to support the scientific studies of the IGY. The dates coincided with the maximum solar activity in the eleven year solar cycle. About a dozen nations participated and set up stations all over Antarctica. The major US base was at McMurdo Sound and a permanent camp was established at the geographic South Pole. By this time, air operations had matured and permanent airports had been established on the continent, notably Williams Field at McMurdo. By this time, VX-6, a special navy squadron, based at Quonset, R.I., had been assigned the overall duties of supporting polar exploration. During the IGY, they operated the Lockheed P2V Neptune, Douglas R5D Skymaster, the deHavilland of Canada UC-1 Otter, Grumman's UF-1 Albatross, Sikorsky HO4S-3 XXXXX, and the last appearance for the military of the DC-3 airframe, the LC-117D Skytrooper. The USAF also flew in cargo in Douglas C-124 Globemasters.

*The Air National Guard and the New Aviation
Face of Subsequent "Deep Freeze" Operations*

The United States, among many other nations, continued research and exploration and aircraft became larger, navigational methods improved dramatically, and techniques were improved. Much of the work was carried out under the auspices of the National Science Foundation. For many years, the Navy's VX-6 provided the air support in a long line of "Deep Freeze" operations, supplemented by USAF aircraft. Both military

and civilian scientific projects benefited from the airlifts which supplied transport to the continent and provided logistic and personnel support to the many outlying stations.



*Sikorsky LH-34D Seabat at New England
Air Museum*

In 1988, the United States started shutting down the Distant Early Warning radar stations in Greenland. This artifact of the Cold War, called the DEW Line, had been developed to provide early warning of a Soviet air attack over the arctic. A changing political situation and technological advances made the DEW line redundant. Air support for the DEW Line had been provided by the 109th Airlift Wing but the mission was ending. The Navy, facing maintenance problems on their old LC-130s requested that the 109th and their ski-equipped LC-130s take over search and rescue responsibilities in Antarctica. Over time the Air Force entered into the cargo mission to support the US run Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station. It was extremely hazardous to fly supplies in during the long dark months of the Antarctic winter so the summer season required a busy schedule of flights. The addition of the USAF aircraft took some of the pressure off the Navy flight schedulers, crews, maintenance personnel and especially aircraft.



*New York Air National Guard LC-130 Hercules
Displays Skis and JATO Bottles*

Committee's met, negotiations were held, and over a five year period, a new plan emerged. Essentially, the 109th Airlift Wing, based at Schenectady County Airport in New York, received a full complement LC-130H ski-equipped aircraft and the USAF assumed full responsibility for aerial military support of the US Antarctic Program run under by a contractor under National Science Foundation direction. USAF McDonnell-Douglas C-17 Globemaster IIIs operated by the Air Mobility Command stage from Christchurch, New Zealand and deliver their cargos to "The Ice," a name used to refer to the southernmost continent. The Air Guard LC-130s then take the supplies and personnel to the many remote sites where research is being conducted.

Civilian Flight Activities in Antarctica

The United States discourages civilians from engaging in Antarctic activities and are often somewhat reluctant to offer assistance. Nonetheless, "The Ice" has a magnetic appeal for a certain brand of adventurer. Trans-continent treks, mountain climbing, and overflights are some of these activities. An organization, Antarctic Logistics and Expeditions, operating out of Punta Arenas, Argentina flies Ilyushin IL-76s and deHavilland of Canada Twin Otters to selected private fields such as Patriot Hills and the South Pole. For prices ranging from \$20,00 to

\$50,000 dollars, you can visit the Emperor Penguin breeding grounds, climb the Vinson Massif, or ski at the Pole!

Back in 1966, the great American long distance flier Max Conrad was engaged to fly a Piper PA-24 Aztec named *White Penguin* to carry a group of climbers who wished to ascend Mt. Vinson. The leader of the expedition, Woodrow Wilson Sayre, a grandson of President Wilson, had previously offended the Communist Chinese government by an unauthorized ascent of Mt. Everest, via Tibet, which China claims as its own. The plan to climb Mt. Vinson failed but several years later, he returned to Punta Arenas, attached skis, and headed south. Conrad made several landings on the continent, incurring some damage and then aborting the mission due to maintenance problems and fuel shortages.

In 1970, Conrad returned, under protest by Navy officialdom but with the support of Senator Barry Goldwater! VX-6 escorted him from McMurdo and he made it to the Pole, the first civilian aircraft to do so, but crashed on take-off on his return flight. VX-6 flew him out but the aircraft remained and is now buried under a 40 year accumulation of snow.



*Conrad's Wrecked Aztec N123LF (for Let's Fly)
(USN/NSF Photo)*

The aircraft pictured in this article are the actual aircraft which have been to "The Ice."

(Part II, The Arctic, will appear in a future issue.)

SPECIAL FEATURE

The "October Classic," the Worlds Series, is almost upon us and to celebrate, The Daedalean presents a special feature..

BASEBALL AND AVIATION

by
Hap Rocketto

"Mister, that boy couldn't hit the ground if he fell out of an airplane."

-Casey Stengel, Baseball Hall of Fame manager, commenting on the hitting skills of a rookie-

Baseball and aviation: both of these quintessentially American activities have European antecedents but, for all intents and purposes, they are United States inventions. Baseball's birth is shrouded in the haze of mythology while aviation's history is well documented. On the eve of the Civil War both began to appear in the consciousness and the newspapers of the United States and have been intertwined ever since.

Sixteen New York area clubs formed the sport's first governing body, the National Association of Base Ball Players, in 1857. About the same time balloonist Thaddeus S.C. Lowe was working on plans for a transatlantic flight by balloon when they were ended by the Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter, the act which touched off the Civil War. Lowe was in contact with President Abraham Lincoln. He demonstrated to him how valuable the balloon might be for military reconnaissance and was soon after appointed Chief Aeronaut of the Union Army Balloon Corps.

Lowe's demonstration for Lincoln took place on July 11, 1861 and, while he dangled 500 feet over the White House and telegraphed Lincoln a test message, it was more than likely that he also observed Union Army regulars and northern militia volunteers assigned to defend the Federal Capitol taking their leisure by playing at baseball.

On October 15, 1890. the third of seven sons was born to David and Ida Eisenhower in Denison, Texas. The young man entered West Point and tried out for the baseball team but did not make it. He would later say, "Not making the baseball team at West Point was one of the greatest disappointments of my life, maybe my greatest."

Eisenhower was issued private pilot's license number 95 by the Commonwealth of the Philippines concurrent with one, number 93258, from the United States Civil Aeronautics Authority on July 5, 1939. The day before the New York Yankees celebrated Lou Gehrig Day giving Gehrig gifts and retiring his uniform number. Gehrig is the first player in major league history to be so honored. When Eisenhower stood on the Capitol steps on January 20, 1952 and took the oath of office he became the first United States President to hold a pilot's license.

President George H.W. Bush was born in 1924 the same year the Washington Senators won the World Series. As the 41st President, and the second to be a rated pilot, he would have a lot to do with senators. Bush joined the US Navy after graduating from Phillips Academy in 1942 and was designated a Naval Aviator on June 9, 1943, just three days short of his 19th birthday, making him the youngest to have that distinction to that date. After the war he entered Yale where he starred at first base, played in the collegiate World Series, meet Babe Ruth, and captained the Yale baseball team.

Gene Autry, America's Singing Cowboy, was a private pilot who joined the Army Air Corps in 1942. As a Flight Officer he ferried fuel, ammunition, and arms in a C-47 Skytrain in the China-Burma-India Theater flying over the Himalayas, "The Hump." Autry had a great love for baseball, he played semi pro ball as a youth, and bought a controlling interest in the Anaheim Angels. Upon his death the team retired the number 26 in his honor. It is symbolic of being the 26th man on the 25 man roster.

Flight Officer Bill Atwood, of the Phillies, had 1,400 hours of flying time already under his belt as a civilian pilot and became a C-46 pilot stationed at Sookertang, India, flying "The Hump" with Ferry Command.

Clarence "Soup" Campbell played for the Indians before enlisting in the USAAF. By 1945 he was a major and squadron executive officer with the 16th Bomb Group, 315th Bomb Wing of the 20th Air Force based at Northwest Field on Guam – a B-29 Superfortress unit flying bombing missions to Japan.

Claude Corbitt, who would play for the Dodgers and Reds after the war, earned his wings and commission and was assigned to Selman Field, the only complete navigation training station in the country, where cadets received their entire training ending with a commission and navigators wings without ever leaving the field.

Umpire August J "Augie" Donatelli was stationed in England with the 379th Bomb Group as a tail-gunner on a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress. On March 4, 1944, during the first American raid on Berlin, his plane was shot down. While a POW, Donatelli began umpiring prison softball games.

Senator center fielder Elmer Gedeon earned his pilot's wings and a commission. Gedeon was the navigator in a North American B-25 Mitchell bomber which crashed on takeoff. Despite suffering three broken ribs, he managed to free himself and crawl from the wreckage. When he realized a crew mate was still inside, Gedeon, without hesitation, went back inside the burning plane and pulled him to safety. He was hospitalized for 12 weeks and awarded the Soldiers' Medal for his heroics

In July 1943, Gedeon began training on Martin B-26 Marauders, "The Widowmaker." Gedeon was the pilot of one of 30 Marauders assigned to bomb the German construction works at Bois d'Esquerdes. It was the group's thirteenth mission. As they approached the target area, German anti-aircraft fire intensified and Gedeon's bomber was

hit by flak and went down. Gedeon was reported missing in action, and it was not until May 1945 that his father, received word from his son's commanding officer that Elmer's grave had been located. Gedeon was returned to the United States and rests at Arlington National Cemetery

Captain Buddy Lewis, of the Senators, was a C-47 transport pilot, in the China-Burma-India Theater Lewis amassed 1,799 flying hours of which 611 were in combat during 392 missions in 18 months. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal.

Phil Marchildon, of the Philadelphia Athletics, trained as an aerial gunner with the Royal Canadian Air Force and was later commissioned a pilot officer. As a tail-gunner in a Handley Page Halifax bomber, Marchildon flew night time missions that were treacherous and uncomfortable, in conditions that were so cold his guns would often freeze. On his 26th mission laying mines at Kiel-he was four missions away from going home-his plane was attacked and set ablaze by a German night fighter. Stranded in the icy water of the Baltic, he was eventually picked up by a Danish fishing boat and handed over to the Germans and became a POW until the war's end.

Bill McCahan of the Phillies received pilot's wings at Spence Field, Georgia on August 4, 1944 and later became a Boeing B-29 Superfortress test pilot at Maxwell Field, Alabama.

Major Bob Neighbors, who played for the Toledo Mud Hens, saw combat duty during the Korean War as a Douglas B-26B Invader pilot with the 13th Bomb Squadron of the 3rd Bomb Group. On August 8, 1952, during a night mission, Neighbors and his crew was reported missing in action after failing to return. The three man crew was never found.

Tom Saffell, minor league player, coach, and executive, trained as a fighter pilot and served in Europe with the 405th Fighter Squadron of the 371st Fighter Group. Saffell was a Republic P-47D Thunderbolt pilot. Between April 1944 and

May 1945 he flew 61 combat missions from bases in France and Germany without a scratch, although he did prang a P-47 on May 21, 1945 at Karlsruhe, Germany.

Robert E "Bert" Shepard was a member of the 55th Fighter Group. Shepard had already flown 33 missions in his Lockheed P-38J Lightning, and on May 21, opening day for the 55th Fighter Group baseball season, he volunteered for his 34th mission. His plane was hit by enemy flak, with shells tearing through his right leg and foot. Shepard was knocked unconscious and at 380mph the fighter plane crashed into the ground. Shepard was taken prisoner and his damaged right leg had to be amputated 11 inches below the knee.

In February 1945, Shepard returned to the United States on a prisoner exchange, as determined as ever to continue with his baseball career. He met with Under Secretary of War, Robert Patterson who asked about his plans for the future, Shepard explained that he wanted to play baseball. Skeptical, but impressed, Patterson contacted Senators' owner, Clark Griffith, and asked him to take a look at the young pitcher. Shepard made his only major league appearance with the Senators down 14-2 to the Red Sox. Shepard came in in relief and struck out the first batter he faced, pitching the remainder of the game and allowing just three hits, one walk and one run. He played in the minor leagues until 1954

Giant Bobby Thompson, who hit "The Shot Heard Around the World", off of Dodger Ralph Branca in the 1951 Dodger-Giant playoff game for the National League title, was in the Air Corps from 1943 through 1945 as a bombardier.

Red Sox left fielder Ted Williams served as a Marine pilot during World War II and the Korean War. Williams could have played baseball for the

Navy. Instead the "Splendid Splinter" served as a flight instructor at Naval Air Station Pensacola teaching young pilots to fly the F4U Corsair. He was on orders to a combat squadron when the war

ended. He was recalled to active duty for service in the Korean War where he flew 39 combat missions in the Grumman F9F Cougar, ironic as his uniform number was also 9.

Jerry Coleman, Yankee second baseman, like Williams, was a Marine aviator who flew 120 combat missions and was awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses. While he and Williams flew for the Marines in two wars, World War II and Korea, Coleman is the only Major League Baseball player to have seen combat in both.

William Brooks "Billy" Southworth Jr was the son of a Hall of Fame Cardinal's manager. Billy played in the minors for three years before joining the USAAF. Southworth served with the 427th Bomb Squadron, 303rd Bomb Group at Molesworth, England. His B-17, "Winning Run" and his practice of wearing a Cardinals' baseball cap, given to him by his father who managed the club, kept him in touch with his baseball roots.

By coincidence a B-17 from the 358th Bomb Squadron in the 303rd, piloted by 2LT Jack Watson and navigated by 2LT Harold Rocketto, had buzzed the 1943 World Series enroute to England. Flying deep into Yankee Stadium the aircraft was so low that, according to the newspapers, Cardinal shortstop Slat Marion could have fielded it.

President George W. Bush played baseball in prep school was managing general partner of the Texas Rangers from 1989-94 and maintained partial ownership of the club until 1998, two years before he was elected the 43rd president. Like his father before him he was a rated military pilot having earned his wings with the US Air Force and then flew F-102s with the 147th Fighter Interceptor Group of the Texas Air National Guard.

There have been some rather unusual aviation/baseball events that have occurred such as

in 1915 when Wilbert Robinson, manager of the Dodgers decided to try to set a record of sorts by catching a baseball dropped from an airplane being

flown 525 feet overhead by aviatrix Ruth Law. She supposedly forgot to bring a baseball and instead dropped a grapefruit, which splattered all over the manager. Outfielder Casey Stengel, later a successful manager himself, is generally believed to have convinced Law to make the switch. From this point on Robinson referred to airplanes as fruit flies.

On September 17, 1935 Brooklyn Dodger outfielder Len Koenecke died aboard a small plane high over Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Released for "behavior and erratic play" in St. Louis, he left town by air, but was ordered off in Detroit because of intoxication. He then chartered a plane for a flight to Buffalo. The ballplayer began to play with the airplane controls, and would not stop when ordered. Koenecke and the co-pilot were soon fighting. The pilot grabbed a fire extinguisher and, while still flying the plane, struck Koenecke on the head. When they finally landed Koenecke was dead.

The 1955 Baseball World Series was seen live on television in Cuba for the first time using a DC-3 to relay the signal from Key West to Havana. Cuban baseball player, Edmundo "Sandy" Amorós, left fielder for the Dodgers, saved the game when, with the bases loaded, he caught a fly and turn it into a double play, getting the two outs needed to end the inning and winning the first and only World Series for Brooklyn.

Thomas Gastall, Baltimore Orioles catcher, was flying over Riviera Beach, Maryland in an Ercoupe on September 20, 1956. The last message received from the plane was that Gastall was trying to make an emergency crash landing into Chesapeake Bay. His body was found 5 days later.

Ken Hubbs, Chicago Cubs second baseman and pilot, used poor judgment in continued a visual flying rules flight into adverse weather conditions near Provo, Utah on February 15, 1964 in a Cessna 172D. He and his passenger were killed in the ensuing crash.

Roberto Clemente, a Pittsburgh Pirate outfielder, was killed on New Year's Eve 1972 when the Douglas DC-7C in which he was a passenger crashed after taking off after losing power in the No. 2 and 3 engines. Clemente was on a relief mission to deliver supplies for earthquake victims in Nicaragua. Clemente is the only member of the 3000th hit club with exactly 3,000 hits. He was voted into the Baseball Hall of Fame when the mandatory five-year waiting period after retirement was waived.

Thurman Munson was the first string catcher for the New York Yankees from 1970. He died in 1979 while practicing landings and takeoffs at the Akron-Canton, Ohio airport in his Cessna Citation. The airplane hit the ground 1000 feet short of the runway, and although two companions aboard did survive the Yankee catcher did not. Munson won the Rookie of the Year award in 1970, was voted the American League MVP in 1976, and on his way to becoming a member to the Hall of Fame. The New York Yankees have kept his locker as it was when he died as a memorial to the team captain.

On March 9, 1991 former baseball player Jim Hardin, who had been a pitcher for the Orioles, the Yankees, and the Braves, died when his Beech Bonanza crashed in Key West, Florida. While in flight, the propeller of his aircraft failed from fatigue, and he lost control while performing an emergency landing.

The Yankees lost catcher Munson in 1979 and on October 11, 2001 Corey Lidle a New York Yankee pitcher crashed into the 20th floor of a 50 story residential building in Manhattan shortly after sending a distress call.

To conclude this piece on baseball one must go to Leroy Robert "Satchel" Paige, the sage of the baseball diamond, who is famous for his high heaters and his "Rules for Staying Young" one of which is: "Airplanes may kill you but they ain't likely to hurt you."